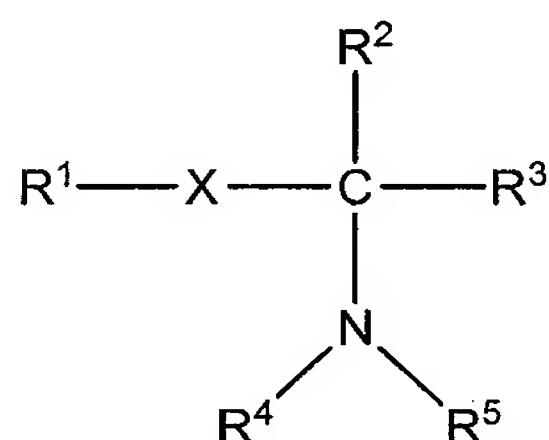


**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (Original) A compound corresponding to formula (I)



in which

- $\text{R}^1$  is a functional group capable of reacting with the functions present on proteins, antibodies or on mineral or organic materials;
- X represents a single bond or a hydrocarbon-based chain consisting of at least one group chosen from alkylene groups and alkenylene groups optionally comprising at least one hetero atom, and from arylene groups;
- $\text{R}^2$  is a group  $\text{A}^2$  that is anionic at neutral pH or an alkylene or alkenylene group containing from 1 to 4 carbon atoms and bearing at least one such group  $\text{A}^2$ , said alkylene or alkenylene group optionally comprising at least one hetero atom in the chain;
- $\text{R}^3$  represents H or an alkylene or alkenylene group containing from 1 to 5 carbon atoms and optionally containing at least one hetero atom in the chain, said group optionally bearing at least one group  $\text{A}^3$  that is anionic at neutral pH;
- $\text{R}^4$  is chosen from the groups corresponding to the formula  $-(\text{C})_n-\text{C}-\text{Z}^1-\text{C}-\text{C}-\text{Z}^2-\text{C}-\text{A}^4$  in which n is equal to 1 or 2,  $\text{Z}^1$  and  $\text{Z}^2$  represent, independently of each other, a hetero atom chosen from O and N, at least one being a nitrogen atom forming part of an aromatic heterocycle with the two carbon atoms surrounding it, and  $\text{A}^4$  is a group that is anionic at neutral pH, in which the atom bearing the anionic charge is in the  $\gamma$  position relative to  $\text{Z}^2$ ;
- $\text{R}^5$  is chosen from the groups defined for  $\text{R}^4$  or from groups corresponding to the formula  $-\text{C}-\text{C}-\text{E}^1-\text{C}-\text{C}-\text{E}^2-\text{C}-\text{A}^5$  in which  $\text{E}^1$  and  $\text{E}^2$  represent, independently of each other,

a hetero atom chosen from O and N, and  $A^5$  is a group that is anionic at neutral pH, in which the atom bearing the anionic charge is in the  $\gamma$  position relative to  $E^2$ .

2. (Previously Presented) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein the substituent  $R^1$  is selected from the group consisting of amino, thio, cyano, isocyano, acridinyl, hydrazino, haloacetate, anhydride, triazo, carbonyl, nitrobenzoyl, sulfonyl, thionyl, halide, epoxide, aldehyde, imidazole, hydroxyphenyl, mercapto, N-succinimidyl ester, N-sulfosuccinimidyl ester, maleimido, hydroxyl, carboxyl, thiocyano, and isothiocyano groups.

3. (Previously Presented) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein the substituent  $R^2$  is a group  $A^2$  that is anionic at neutral pH.

4. (Previously Presented) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein the substituent  $R^3$  is H or a  $C_1$  to  $C_3$  alkyl.

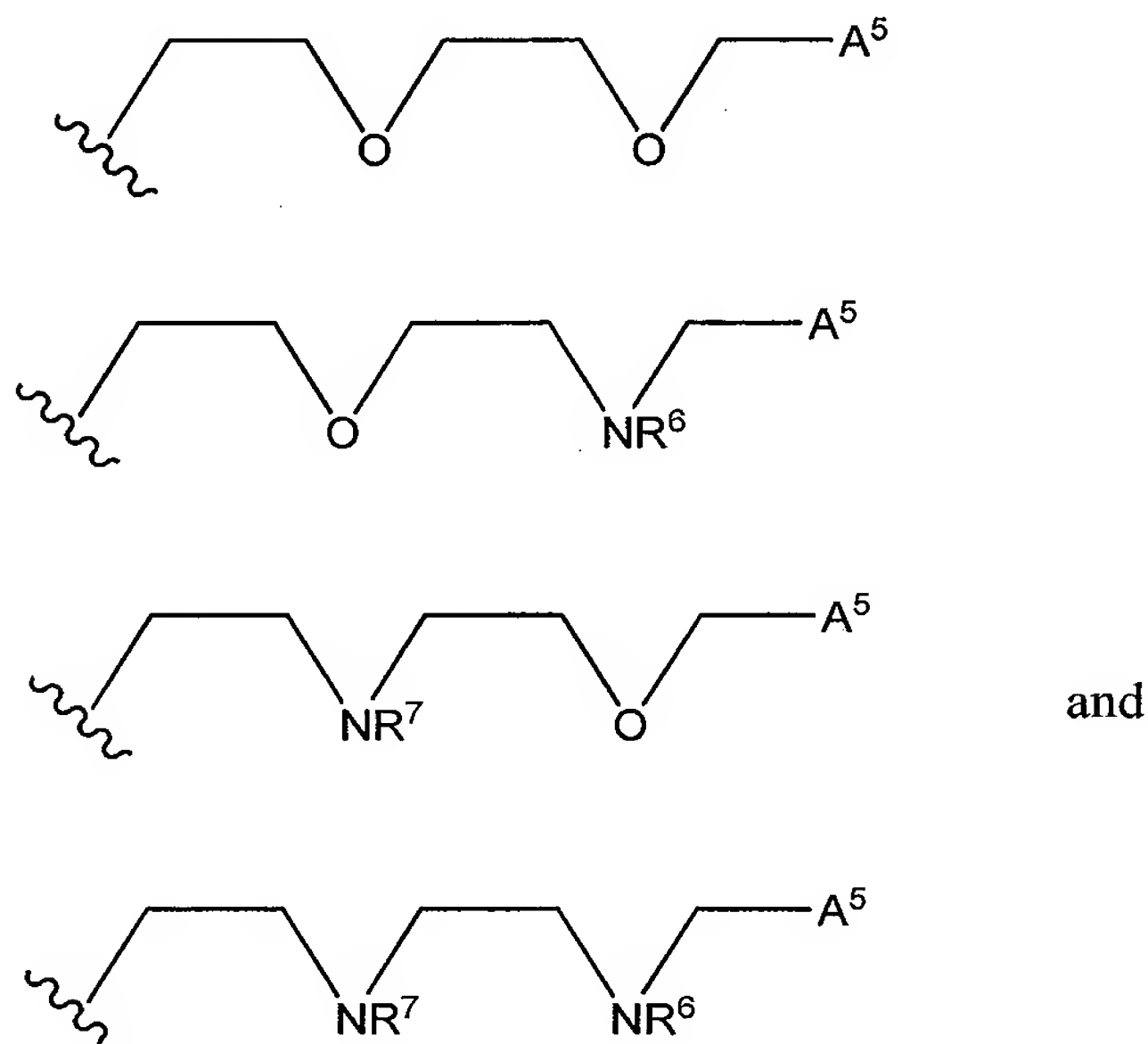
5. (Previously Presented) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein the groups  $Z^1$  and  $Z^2$  of  $R^4$  form part of an aromatic heterocyclic group.

6. (Previously Presented) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein n is equal to 1.

7. (Previously Presented) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein one of the segments  $-C-Z^1-C-$  or  $-C-Z^2-C-$  forms part of a heterocyclic group chosen from pyridyl, pyrimidinyl, quinolyl and isoquinolyl groups.

8. (Currently Amended) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein the segment  $-C-Z^1-C-C-Z^2-C-$  is selected from the group consisting of 2,2'-bipyridinyl, 1,10-phenanthrolinyl, 2,2'-bisquinolyl, 2,2'-bisisoquinolyl and 2,2'-bipyrimidinyl groups, said groups optionally ~~possibly~~ bearing alkyl or alkoxy substituents on at least one carbon atom of a heterocycle.

9. (Previously Presented) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein  $R^5$  is selected from the group consisting of:



in which  $R^6$  and  $R^7$  represent alkyl chains containing from 1 to 5 carbon atoms and optionally containing one or more hetero atoms.

10. (Previously Presented) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein  $R^4$  and  $R^5$  are identical.

11. (Previously Presented) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein the groups  $A^2$ ,  $A^3$ ,  $A^4$  and  $A^5$  that are anionic at neutral pH are chosen, independently of each other, from  $-\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ ,  $-\text{SO}_3\text{H}$ ,  $-\text{P}(\text{O})(\text{OR})\text{OH}$ ,  $-\text{P}(\text{O})\text{R}(\text{OH})$  and  $-\text{P}(\text{O})(\text{OH})_2$  groups in which R is an alkyl group or an aryl group.

12. (Currently Amended) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein the compound is in cationic form, the nitrogen bearing the substituents  $R^4$  and  $R^5$ , and optionally ~~also possibly~~ the hetero atoms  $Z^1$ ,  $Z^2$ ,  $E^1$  and  $E^2$ , being in protonated form.

13. (Previously Presented) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein the compound is in anionic form, the various groups  $A^i$  being in the form of salts.

14. (Currently Amended) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein the compound is in zwitterionic form, the nitrogen bearing the substituents  $R^4$  and  $R^5$ , and optionally ~~also possibly~~ the hetero atoms  $Z^1$ ,  $Z^2$ ,  $E^1$  and  $E^2$ , being in protonated form, and the various groups  $A^i$  being in the form of salts.

15. (Previously Presented) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein X is an arylene group comprising one or more fused or unfused aromatic nuclei, said nucleus (nuclei) optionally bearing one or more aliphatic hydrocarbon-based groups.

16. (Previously Presented) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein the group X is an alkylene or alkenylene group containing from 1 to 10 carbon atoms.

17. (Previously Presented) The compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein the group X is an arylene group containing from 5 to 10 carbon atoms.

18. – 32. (Cancelled)